

# Government

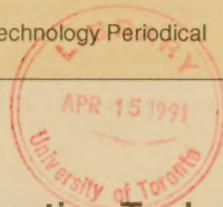
## Records

### Bulletin

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## Information Technology Policy: Not Just for "Techies"

Treasury Board's new Management of Information Technology Policy (MIT) is meant for all information specialists.

Stewart Houlden, the principal author of the policy, stressed MIT's wide application to a September meeting of the Records Management Institute and the Ottawa Chapter of the Association of Records Management and Administrators. Houlden is a senior policy analyst with Information Technology Management at the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Comparing information and the technologies that store and process it to water and the plumbing that carries it, Houlden warned all information specialists to "recognize the limitations of each discipline. You can't design hardware and software without knowing what information people need to do their jobs. You can't design the information itself without knowing what technology will be used to deliver it."

Partnership is the key to the new Treasury Board strategy and policies on information: "If we're going to improve our information technology systems," explained Houlden, "we're going to have to get the other players involved — the privacy people, the security people and so on."

For decades, business and government have looked to automation to gather and store information. Recently, they have realized that they cannot adopt information technology effectively unless they have a corporate approach to managing their information assets. In the private sector, noted Houlden, chief information officers who address technology alone, apart from corporate information requirements, have had a poor survival record.

The "Information Management" document — the strategic "Foreword" to both MIT and the Management of Government Information Holdings Policy (MGIH) issued in August 1989 — states that "information holdings and information technology are complementary aspects of the management of information-based resources," and that "information management is an essential tool to support, improve and enhance each organization's ability to fulfil its mission and deliver its programs and services by the innovative application of information technology."

The benefits of investing in information and its technologies, not control over information technology purchases, is Treasury Board's new focus. Houlden mentioned that departments are now free to spend up to \$1 million on new systems and \$3 million on replacement systems without going before Treasury Board. (These amounts include five years' operations, and larger departments have higher spending authority levels.) The emphasis on strategic investment appears in the requirement that Information Management Plans be

"derived from and strongly support the institutions' missions and operational plans." This challenges managers to demonstrate through a business case that a particular application of information technology will provide "a clear benefit or return to the organization as a whole." New systems should conform to government-wide information technology standards, and they should be implemented "with due regard for people."

Houlden ended his presentation with examples of areas where information managers and technology specialists should be collaborating. These include information management within office systems; retention and disposition of information; access to information; security, privacy and controls on disclosure; and the establishment of a comprehensive inventory of an institution's information holdings.

The partnership is evolving. In five years, speculated Houlden, it might be possible to write about both domains — information and technology — in a single policy document. ■

## Office Software Requirements

The National Archives is pleased to make available the report "Information Management in Office Systems — Results of the FOREMOST Project."

Based on field trials, the report lists and explains "functional requirements" for office system software. Functional requirements express a client's needs precisely and provide a yard-stick against which to measure the supplier's "functional specifications" (the supplier's claims concerning the product's capabilities).

The National Archives is conducting further studies to enhance the ability of government institutions to manage that component of their corporate memory affected by the introduction and use of integrated office support systems. A further report, planned for spring 1991, will be reviewed by the Treasury Board Office Systems Standards Working Group. ■

## ■ Uneven Implementation of Records Management Policy

In a special report submitted to the Secretary of the Treasury Board in September 1990, the National Archivist stated that progress in putting strong records management programs in place in government institutions has generally been slow.

A recent survey, conducted by the National Archives at the request of the Treasury Board Secretariat, looked into the state of records management within the federal government. It focussed on the progress of institutions towards implementation of the 1983 Treasury Board Records Management Policy. (That policy was replaced in 1989 by the Management of Government Information Holdings Policy [MGIH]). The Treasury Board Secretariat intended that the government-wide records management review serve as a benchmark for evaluating progress in implementing MGIH.

The review encompassed the 60 institutions subject to Treasury Board policy. It addressed the following issues: the management control framework for the records management function; retrieval; storage and protection; mail and messenger services; scheduling and disposition; automated support for the records management function; and security.

The results of the review showed that, contrary to original expectations, not one of the institutions surveyed was in full compliance seven years after the policy was issued. Some were, however, approaching full compliance. About half the institutions had achieved "excellent" or "good" progress in implementing the records management policy. The rest were graded "fair" or "poor."

Based on these findings, National Archivist Dr. Jean-Pierre Wallot concluded that senior managers of institutions in the "fair" and "poor" categories may not be viewing records management as a priority. He added that government institutions with strong records management programs in place would have a solid platform from which to launch implementation of the MGIH policy.

In his final statement, Dr. Wallot stressed that "...information is crucial to the success of the mission of each department and agency. It will be necessary for institutions to manage information in a way that will properly serve the interests of individual institutions and the government as a whole, and to preserve information, where appropriate, for generations of Canadians to come. ■

## ■ Image Technology Periodical

Anyone responsible for managing information or acquiring goods and services in the image management and micrographics field will find *Image: An Imaging Technology Newsletter* and *Focus On* useful.

Launched by the National Archives in the spring of 1989, *Image* contains news about technological developments and offers advice on using micrographics and optical disks to manage records. It also reviews articles, reports and books.

Its supplement, *Focus On*, is intended to form part of a reference library on selected image management standards. For example, issue number 5 concentrates on a recently issued Canadian standard, *Microfilm as Documentary Evidence*. The review outlines the fundamentals of a credible micrographics program as described in the standard, and points out issues of particular concern to federal government institutions.

*Image* and *Focus On* form an up-to-date reference package for records managers, micrographic coordinators, and materiel managers within the government. It is sent to these federal employees automatically, and to others on request. ■

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## Image et Point de mire

Étude portant sur les 60 institutions suisses affiliées à la Politique du CT et formant une entité de charge de l'I. L'analyse de l'ensemble des services publics du CT et de l'ensemble des services publics de l'Etat et des communes, dans le cadre de l'application de la législation suisse sur les services publics, a permis de dresser un tableau des services publics et privés et de leur rôle dans la vie sociale et économique du pays. Les résultats de cette étude sont présentés dans le rapport suivant.

## Image et Point de mire

Dans un rapport spécial soumis au Secrétaire du Conseil du Trésor, en septembre 1990, l'Archiviste national recommande l'établissement d'un système de gestion des documents au sein des institutions gouvernementales. Le rapport s'appuie sur une récente étude, effectuée par les AN à la demande du SCT. Cette étude consiste-t-elle à examiner l'état de la gestion des documents au sein des institutions gouvernementales.

## Gestion des documents : sept ans après

■ Les AN poursuivent leurs études afin d'améliorer la capacité des institutions gouvernementales à gérer la partie de leur mémoire institutionnelle touchée par l'introduction et l'utilisation de systèmes de bureautique. Un rapport additionnel, prévu pour le printemps 1991, sera examiné par le Groupe de travail du CT sur les normes des systèmes de bureautique.

## Exigences fonctionnelles

■ deux domaines — l'information et la technologie — dans le même document d'orientation.

